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By SIDNEY WEBB

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# Our OTTAWA LETTER

(From our own correspondent)

THE third regular session of the present Parliament has now commenced, and the inaugural function on February 26th, was marked by a display of ceremonial and color such as Ottawa has not witnessed since the grim spectre of war arrived in 1914. In the intervening years, a Spartan simplicity had been practiced in regard to the opening function, and there are some who think it might with advantage have been continued in days when public and private economy is an urgent national need, called for by the voices of our greatest statesmen and financial potentates.

But the British race likes to consecrate its great occasions by stately ceremonies, and the return of Parliament to its proper home was perhaps a special event, which justified the revival of the old pomp and formality. The new House of Parliament is far from complete, but it is in a much more habitable state than any who saw it two weeks ago, would ever have imagined possible. It would have been better, however, if the advice of the architects had been listened to, and the actual occupation postponed for another year, till it was completely finished, but members and officials were anxious to get away from their cramped temporary quarters, in the Victoria Museum. Many of the former feel that their brief day of public glory is drawing to a close, and would like ere they are consigned to private life by a critical and unkind electorate to enjoy one session of the real home of Parliament.

The cost is staggering, but Messrs. Pearson and Marchand, the architects, and their allies have given the people of Canada a magnificent structure for their money. Its full glories will not be realised

till the central tower is built and the full final embellishments are added, but there is general agreement that the new building combines great aesthetic beauty and every modern convenience. There could be no more picturesque site for a Parliament House than the lofty cliff, towering about the swift-flowing Ottawa, and if noble surroundings were any guarantee of the honesty and efficiency of legislatures, the people of Canada might count themselves insured against misgovernment.

Apparently a great many people, especially ladies, attached great importance to being able to say, in years to come, that they had attended the first opening of Parliament, in the new buildings, for two days before the ceremony, all available tickets have been greedily taken up, and long before the function began, every seat in the new Commons Chamber, which had been given over to the Senate for the occasion, was occupied. The main part of the audience consisted of ladies, in the full glory of evening dress, and as it was a somewhat "nippy" day, and there are noticeable draughts in the buildings, it is to be hoped that the death rate will not show any rise as the result of the inaugural ceremony. But the feminine sex are capable of great fortitude in the matter of atmospheric conditions. None of them seemed to find at all chilly a temperature which one gentleman said was so low that he had been compelled to seek extra warmth by donning a chamois waistcoat.

The Senate Chamber being still in the workmen's hands, the Commons met in the Railway Committee room, and left their own abode to the venerable gentlemen of the Upper Chamber. At 2.30 p. m., the Hon. Joseph Bolduc, Speaker of the Senate, took his seat, and the first item was the introduction of two new Senators from the province of Quebec, Mr. Thomas Chapais and Mr. Lorne Webster.

After the recruits had been admitted, there entered the usual state procession of the Governor General, his staff, and the officials of Parliament. The Commons, headed by the Speaker, had been summoned to the bar of the Senate to hear the Speech from the Throne, which the Duke proceeded to read in its mellow English voice. One does not look for hectic excitement and startling disclosures in Speeches from the Throne, but this year's bill of fare was even more colorless than usual. It was very discursive and its composition, for which the Cabinet is responsible, did not betray many signs of literary craftsmanship. There were

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gratulatory allusions to the return to the proper parliament buildings and reference to the official arrival of the blessings of peace. There were the usual meaningless platitudes about the state of the world and our own comparatively happy lot and great credit was taken for the administration's success in reestablishing the soldiers in civil life. Whether the G. W. V. A. would endorse these particular clauses of the speech unanimously is another matter.

The legislation forecasted included the Franchise Act, a bill to ratify the opium convention, another dealing with copyrights and measures providing for amendments of the Patent Act, the Loan and Trust Companies Act, the Indian Act, and the Exchequer Courts Act. It was noticeable that there was no indication of any naval policy in the speech from the throne.

After the Commons had been dismissed and filed off in solemn procession, the proceedings took on a social guise, and the Governor-General held a state reception, which was followed in the evening by the usual full dress dinner, at Government House. We may have banned tales from our midst, but

we still cling loyally to the other pomps and vanities, that have descended to us from an age of which few other traces remain. It is perfectly astounding what enormous store a great number of the citizens and citizenesses of Canada set upon participation in public social functions like a viceregal reception and the solemn earnestness with which they approach its various phases is almost pathetic. It, however, affords a warning that among the more prosperous classes the passion for democracy is only superficial and the social elect, who usually, be it remembered, owe their position to the fine acquisitive talents of some hard-working uncultured male in the past, lose no opportunity of emphasising their superiority over the common herd by judicious ostentation of their taste in luxury and their capacity for expenditure of money.

When the Commons had reassembled in their temporary meeting place, Sir George Foster, as Acting-Premier, took occasion to compliment the architects, contractors and workmen upon the splendor of the structure which they had raised between them. He delved a little into history and ventured some

forecasts and benedictions for the future. Beginning his speech in his usual cultured English, Sir George suddenly, to the great delight of the French-Canadian contingent, switched off into their language, and spoke for at least fifteen minutes in French, which acute critics like Mr. Bureau and Mr. Cannon, afterwards acclaimed as very correct and amazingly creditable. Cato, the Roman, learnt Greek at eighty, and Sir George, possibly fired by his example, took French lessons for the first time in his life while kicking his heels at Paris, as a delegate to the Peace Conference. Apparently he got more good out of that gathering than most people for he is now a good French speaker, and what is more he is very proud of his new accomplishment, which he will probably air on every possible occasion during the session. Sir George has indeed mellowed with the passing years and the rasping tongue which once sed to excite bitter enmities and reprisal is no longer in evidence.

Mr. Mackenzie King followed in high poetic vein and any compliments which Sir George had omitted he filled in. Mr. King has the art of saying the proper thing in graceful diction and can be very fluent and happy on such occasions. But many observers thought that in his references to royalty, and their connection with the building, he laid the butter on just a little too thick. Due respect should be paid to the Crown on all seemly occasions, but it is not the part of one who claims to be the leader of the more democratic party in the country to outdo an old Tory like Sir George in the effusiveness of his public devotion to the throne.

On behalf of the French-Canadian members, Dr. Béland in a perfect little speech thanked Sir George for the compliment he had paid his race by his romantic venture into bilingualism.

Two new members, Mr. Gould, of Assinaboia, and Mr. Halbert, of North Ontario, were introduced, and took their seats. There were some questions and interchanges. Mr. Murphy was anxious to discover the whereabouts of the vagabond Premier, but could elicit no information.

Thereupon the House adjourned till Monday, March 1st, when the serious business of the session will begin with the moving of the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne.

The Commons by that time will be back in their own proper chamber, which has been fitted with the desks and necessary equipment. A more convenient and elegant chamber could scarcely be imagined, and it is to be hoped that the behaviour of its inmates will be in keeping with their surroundings. There was some little controversy about the seating accommodation and arrangement. In the chamber in the Victoria Museum, the

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Crerar group of insurgents had not arrogated to themselves any definite status. Mr. Crerar, however, invariably sat on the cross benches, and his followers were always in the near vicinity. No special group of seats were claimed by them. When the new seats came to be allocated, the people charged with this duty came to the decision that as the insurgents had been elected as Unionists, and there were no longer cross benches, it would not be unreasonable to seat them on the government side of the House.

So Mr. Crerar was planted next to Sir Thomas White, and Dr. Clark and other western low tariff champions were skilfully dispersed among sound protectionists. As soon as Dr. Clark arrived, he made protest and the arrangements were hastily altered. The radical insurgents were allocated a group of seats on the opposition side of the House, near the door. It is not a central position, but it is the best arrangement possible under the circumstances. Mr. Burnham, who repudiated the Coalition last session, has a place on the rear-most row on the government side.

Not all the members have arrived and many have not settled down in their quarters, so that it is difficult to gain much information about their ideas on the political situation and the state of feeling in the country. All the westerners are agreed on one point, that the farm-

ers' movement is covering like a racing tide all old political landmarks in the prairie provinces and that is five sixths of the seats neither of the old parties has the remotest chance against them.

As for the Coalition, the very mention of its name evokes language that lacks neither fire nor color. Government supporters naturally display more interest in the question of the leadership and the fate of their organisation than in the legislative programme. There seems to be a feeling growing up that a decision should not be forced this session. More and more, it is becoming clear that the personality of Sir Robert Borden was the only safe cement which could hold the variegated and ill-assorted troupe called Unionists together, and hope still lingers that he may yet return to his duties.

At any rate, it looks as the party manipulators will keep up the pretence that he is destined to be restored at some date or other to his country, in the full vigour of health, and will take the ground that as long as this possibility exists, it is unseemly and ungrateful to begin any further discussion about his successor. The rank and file will accept this decision as a good means of putting off the evil day of crisis, but they will want some elucidation at an early date of what shape the future policy of the Coalition is to take.

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On this score, there is a volume of outspoken criticism of the Government by their supporters. They denounce the Government for its vacillation in leadership and policy and its failure to create a proper political organisation. Col. Currie and his train of diehard Tories still demand the restoration of the old Tory party in all its glory, but their voices are weak and the shrewder strategists know that this is an idle and impossible dream. The radical insurgents, whom Mr. Crerar leads, will pursue an attitude of watchful waiting; they will attend the caucus of neither of the two major parties and will adopt a completely independent and critical attitude.

A strange mystery surrounds the Board of Commerce, of which the Chairman, Judge Robson, has just resigned. It is obvious that there is an acute difference of opinion between him and his colleagues, and the statements issued are very unsatisfying. There are sinister rumors abroad in Ottawa and parliamentary inquiry should be granted. If the Opposition does not raise the question in the house, they will fail in their duty to the public.

J. A. Stevenson.



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## Vacation Money for Canada

(By GEORGE PIERCE)

SOME years ago America inaugurated a campaign of "See America first." The newspapers, magazines and movies combined in a peppery organization which secured remarkable results. Citizens of the republic were importuned to familiarize themselves in their travels with the scenic wonders and the places of historic importance to be found in their own country before arranging for European trips. The fundamental principles of this campaign were more or less sentimental. While it is true that the United States abounds in beautiful natural sceneries, it is woefully lacking in the monumental historical structures and sites with which Europe is enriched. But the campaign was founded upon the very logical premise that it was infinitely more practical for the American to have a first-hand knowledge of the country which provided for his subsistence, than to wander over the Sahara Desert or bark his shins on a king's tomb in Egypt. It was even hinted that it was not necessary to go to Monte Carlo if you had the gambling instinct; Wall Street was just around the corner.

It was clearly demonstrated by traceable results that more than one hundred and fifty million dollars was saved to the American people in this way.

Just now, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association is inaugurating a similar move in Canada which is highly commendable for self-evident reasons. There are very few Canadians who know and appreciate the scenic wonders of Canada. Fortunately, I have had the opportunity of visiting the centres of interest in all the Provinces, and, with one exception, I have visited every State in the union of States to the south of us. Any traveller will vouch for the assertion that Canada offers to the tourist even greater pleasures than may be found in the Republic.

If there is one reason more than any other why we should travel in Canada this summer, it is the unfavorable rate of exchange as between Canada and the United States. To cart our sound dollars across the boundary line at a loss of at least fifteen per cent, and to pay the American top price for clothing verges on financial lunacy. Americans will flock up here by thousands. The favorable rate of exchange, coupled with the proper publicity south of the line, will probably produce astonishing results. While there is every reason for the Americans to visit with us this year, all patriotic Canadians who are willing to assist the Dominion in recovering from the adverse conditions which have produced the unfavorable rate of exchange, will forego European and American travel for the big, healthy, out-doors of Canada during the coming touring season. You may not find the same luxuries, but your digestion and appetite and the Canadian treasury will be vastly improved if you use a little judgment in arranging your summer amusements.

Many complaints are voiced concerning the poor hotel accommodation encountered by the Canadian tourist, but we must remember that many will not equip summer hotels on expensive and elaborate scales unless we indicate our willingness to support such enterprises. The time has undoubtedly arrived when it is the duty of every Canadian to assist in keeping Canadian dollars in circulation at home.

I recently saw a comparison of forty-nine manufactured articles made in Canada with similar articles manufactured in the United States. Most inexperienced buyers would be unanimous in agreeing that the Canadian merchandise was more substantial, quite as stylish, and very much cheaper. The notion that American goods are superior is entirely wrong. Every one of us should make it a principle to demand a comparison from and merchant who glibly advises us to buy goods of foreign manufacture. Give the home product a fair chance. You will be surprised to find it just as good, if not better, and you will be rewarded by the saving effected.

The railroadmen of Canada alone have a buying power of nearly six millions a week. Let every railroad man in the future make it a rule to have both articles laid on the counter for comparison. This will compel Canadian merchants to stock up with Canadian goods. This means busy Canadian factories, which in



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turn mean busy Canadian workmen. The Canadian dollar is worth a hundred cents, the Canadian goods are worthy of the support of that hundred per cent dollar. If the "Made in Canada" stamp is not on your goods, it ought to be. If the Yankees want to sell us, then let them put their factories up here so that we can know what goes into their goods and have some guarantee that the goods are as good as they look.

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When I have time, the friend I love so well  
Shall know no more those weary toiling days;  
I'll lead his feet in pleasant paths always,  
And cheer his heart with words of kindly praise—  
When I have time.

When you have time that friend you hold so dear  
May be beyond the reach of your intent—  
May never know that you so kindly meant  
To fill his life with bright content—  
When you had time.

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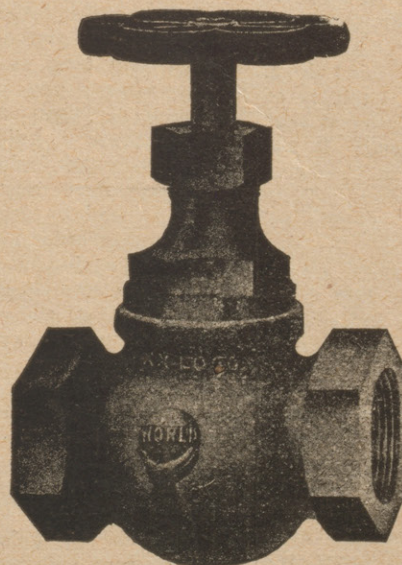
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## Waning Confidence in the Press

(By KENNEDY CRONE.)

IT is inconceivable that I, a common union journalist, with a common working card in my pocket, should be allowed to break in on the stately and mutual admiration atmosphere of the Empire Press Conference in Canada this summer, which, say the organizers, will be attended by leading newspaper publishers from all parts of the Empire. I am only a sort of underdog of the newspaper business, and I have queer notions.

But even if the inconceivable happened, and some idiot planned to present me as a speaker, I should decline, as I have only two knees and I am sure both would collapse before such a great assemblage, especially as I have never made a speech in my life, and hope I never will, for everybody's sake. Still, I can imagine myself taking to that crowd, and this is a record of that imagination, though you are not obliged to read it:—

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:

There has grown up in recent years a distrust of the daily press. I am old enough in the newspaper game to remember when readers swore by their editor's opinions, and when news was accepted as "Gospel truth, for I saw it in the papers". Newspaper readers no longer swear by editorial opinions or the news columns, many are frankly distrustful, and many others are aggressive and violent in their derision and denunciation of the ethics — or lack of ethics — of the press. It has been widely stated, with what truth I do not know, that neither parliament nor press is representative of the people to-day.

Perhaps most of you would admit and could trace the history of this change from confidence to criticism, even if you differed as to causes. The greatest visible and meretricious expression of the change I found coming from organized labor in all English-speaking countries, though, great as that is, I am doubtful if it represents half of the critical attitude that exists; part from the view of organized labor, there are many little signs which show the way the wind blows. The labor movement itself is so disgusted with the daily press that within the past few years it has put into the field an extensive weekly and monthly press of its own, and is moving swiftly towards the production of its own daily papers, of which there are already several. There are said to be over six hundred labor newspapers in the United States and Canada to-day.

### A Good Deal of Reason

Candidly, I think there is a good deal of reason for dissatisfaction and reviling. I am a union journalist largely because of that reason, and because I wish to see it removed. At the same time, I know the difficulties and the charms of the business, as I have worked amongst them daily for twenty-two years. There are bad publishers and bad journalists, and there is much rottenness in the system governing good, bad and indifferent publishers and journalists; but I would be a poor creature not to recognize the sterling worth of publishers I know or know of, and I would be an ingrate indeed if I failed to give tribute to the hundreds of

skilled and manly journalists it has been my privilege to work alongside.

Putting aside the causes, for the time being, and looking only to the condition, may I ask if you have given it serious thought? Or do you intend to remain complacent and self-satisfied while the feelings of distrust and bitterness intensify against you as time goes on, and finally produce a condition which either breaks on your own threshold or supplants you? It seems to me that quite a lot of you have your heads in the sand in this matter, good heads that ought to be up and looking about so that they might accomplish something substantial, something satisfying and trustworthy, for the people of the Empire and for yourselves.

### Damnable Doctrine

Some of you may point to swelling dividends and increasing circulations as refutations of criticism, measures of progress. But they are just as liable to be measures of greed and monopoly and special privilege. Concentrated money, of itself, is not the fetish of even a decade ago; if you do not care a hoot for anything as long as you pile up money, you are hastening the day of your disaster. The doctrine that a publisher's first duty is to make dividends, and a journalist's first duty is to earn his daily bread by doing all that a publisher may order him to do, is a damnable doctrine, a capital crime of economic determinism. Bear in mind, too, that many people patronize your papers as a matter of needs or particular interests, yet are still distrustful, still hoping that you will get your Waterloo, still working to give it to you. Confidence in the press is sinking fast; without confidence you will stand on the edge of the chasm, and some day the gale will make a merry mess of both good and bad. I hope I have shocked you.

Have I a plan? Of course. My plan, very earnestly submitted, is that you heartily encourage the formation of journalists' unions in your various offices. Haw, haw! And some of you cry "Fool!" But let me ramble on a bit, I beg of you.

### Now Law of Society

It is not my intention to state the case for the recognition of

journalists' unions and the acceptance of the principle of collective bargaining in relation to them. I think it would be a waste of your time and mine, and an insult to your intelligence as men of affairs, as founts of public information, and, indeed, possibly as the real (if unwanted) parliamentarians of the Empire, to state de novo a case which in all its essential points has been more or less noticeably gathering weight and approval since the Middle Ages, and which can be said to have developed almost a fixed law of our modern society, defied only by those whom we at present describe as reactionaries, and whom, in the near future, we shall probably deal with under the revised Criminal Code.

The right of your journalists to organize and their right to be dealt with collectively through their chosen representatives, are rights as fundamental as the right to vote. These rights will not be questioned by men of clear thought and clear conscience in the publishing business or in any other business; there is nothing in them for clear-headed and conscientious employers to fear, and much to profit from. It is an axiom of trade unionism, a product of long experience, that interference with these rights of employees comes from the worst employers, and that kindly recognition of them comes from the best employers. If any one of you were to question

these rights in relation to the journalists in your employ, I should take the ground that, had there been no obvious cause for the exercise of these rights before, you had by your own action furnished substantial suspicion that good cause existed. I also assure you that these established rights can be violated only at the peril of losing the fighting strength of the whole organized labor movement, and putting you in worse case than before in the eyes of the community.

### Seek Social Justice

But why fight, increase bitterness, make cleavage more pronounced? No journalists' union will fight you if you meet it on the fair and friendly terms it offers you; it is armed only on a matter of defence against you.

Some of you picture journalists' unions as soulless pirates of your pocketbook. You fancy that their

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only aim is to forcibly jack up wages and reduce hours. You make a grave error. What they seek is social justice — mainly made up of the right of self-expression and self-determination; the right to decent food, clothing and shelter; the right to a little pleasure and culture; the right to be brothers and sisters, and to serve one another; the right to raise their own standards, make their craft more efficient and honorable and honored, for the good of all the people; the right to be free in thought and speech. Incidental to social justice may arise the questions of fair wages and reasonable hours; perhaps, to begin with, because these are elementary forms of social justice, they loom big upon the stage; but I would ask you to believe (and can prove it if you doubt it), that these are only results developing from desire to turn social unfairness and social iniquity into social justice. Would you deny social justice?

Many of you deny it now. Some of you make a pretty complete job of it. Others of you deny it in varying extents. Some of you deny very little of it, and here and there a few of you deny it not at all.

### Only One Sure Way

Under our system, there is only one sure way for journalists to get social justice, and that is through trade unionism. (Some people, as you know, would change the system and mop the floor with you, but I am not of them.) It is far easier to suggest that social justice can be got as long as men and women can be fired and starved like dogs for making suggestions that publishers may not like, irrespective of the merit of those suggestions. Trade unionism makes free men and women of them. Some of you are inspiring and supporting non-union associations in rivalry to union organizations. That is the measure of your fear of the journalistic freedom and independence that comes from trade unionism and nowhere else. You believe in the Machiavellian maxim of "Divide and rule". You fear in your mean little souls that your monopoly of human rights is in danger of being assailed, as it really is. You may talk ethics and exalted motives till you are green in the face, but you are beating the wind, furnishing more material than ever for the scoffers and the cynics. Journalists' associations financed by publishers are the veriest humbug, and I hope that you will discover it in time to save your face.

### The Test of the Truth

If a publisher told me, a working journalist, that he had given social

justice to his unorganized journalists or his bottle-fed-associationized journalists, I would be interested but I would not be convinced. If he told me that he had given social justice, and that he had also suppressed a journalists' union because he thought it unnecessary in his paragon of an office, I would call him a liar and a knave. If he told me that he had given social justice, and that his story was confirmed by the journalists' union of which his employees were members, I would believe him and honor him. Are these opinions of mine limited of circulation and extreme of character? In the English-speaking world alone, they would be definitely backed by thousands of journalists, by close on twelve million trade unionists, by at least three national Departments of Labor and three national Labor parties, by the thinkers of half a dozen of the greatest Christian churches, by practically every social welfare agency, probably backed by the bulk of the people in the communities in which you live.

### An Immense Gain

It is my contention that if you gave the social justice I speak of to your journalists, in the only honest and certificated way, which is the trade union way, that you would gain immensely. Some of your most serious and obvious defects, giving rise to the most serious doubt and distrust of your newspapers, would be greatly modified and some of your future dangers would be offset. What is needed is free and independent, friendly cooperation and consultation with working journalists, the makers of the papers, not the rule of the great I AM, and of the human rubber stamps and whip-crackers so often appointed to take charge of editorial departments. Editorial departments are notoriously the most haphazard and unsystematic, the most neglected, morally, physically and professionally, of all the departments of a modern newspaper office. I could supply the specific details, but would prefer, lest you think me a destroyer rather than an upbuilder, to leave them to trade union conference.

### Progress means change

Publishers have not, as some seem to think, a monopoly of brains and ideas, or even of high motives and ambitions, or even, indeed, of plain horse sense. I would go further and say that, judging by the known product of publishers, and the known thoughts and aspirations of the journalists they rule, that the journalists have by far the best of the show in all these things. There will, therefore, be notable changes when journalists

become emancipated, the loyal cooperators and partners of publishers instead of serfs, fawners, spittle-lickers and the necessarily selfish opportunists that too many of them are. But all real progress is a result of change, just as all actual stagnation is the accompaniment of clinging to established orders, of thinking in terms of institutions, customs and traditions rather than in terms of human service. And real progress is good for the publisher as well as for the journalist.

### General Improvement

What happens if social justice is established in newspaper offices? Immediately, inevitably, there are better publishers, better journalists and better journalism, for the one is contingent in the other. If we have confidence amongst ourselves, our confidence carries its own proof on the printed pages. We have social justice within, and it necessarily follows that we struggle for social justice without. I would like to elaborate and detail this point in terms of practical application, as I am sure I could, but it would take a lot of time, and I note that some of you are fidgety already.

Now, let us get back to the causes of the original loss of public confidence. If you will study them out, you will find that all come under the general heading of social justice that is flouted or is supposed to be flouted by the newspapers. But if we have free journalists, free to acquire social justice, free to accord it to others, free to deny its existence where it does not exist, what then? Your free journalists become the guarantee of your faithfulness, your earnestness and your honesty. Their unions exist for the sole purpose of seeing to it that social justice is done; when they depart from that purpose they cease to be unions. Their own direct connections with other unionists are immeasurably greater than any clientele you possess. Through them they can permeate the whole structure of society, mainly sympathetic to them, assuredly sympathetic in practically all its organized parts. What they say is believed because it is impossible for them to say what is not true and continue to exist. What you say may be doubted even if it is true, because society is already suspicious of you and would want more than your own declaration; you have no definite standing in organized labor and in various other organized parts of society, and union journalists have that standing, even although only your humble employees.

It seems to me that the day is coming when some publishers at least will suddenly find it necessary to justify themselves before the community, and, searching anxiously for a means of justification, may by force of circumstances be compelled to say, at last: "I shall unionize the men and women of my editorial staff, give them liberty to tell what they know, and to do what we all think is right. In future you must judge my journalists and I together, not I and my first lieutenants alone".

I hope publishers will not wait for that time; there might be a bad slip-up somewhere and the damage done before the remedy could be applied. Now is the time to get together, not for each party to give as little as he can in return for as much as he can get from the other fellow, but each to be recognizing that social justice is the first law of journalism, whether in relation to the internal working of the newspaper office, to the publisher or to the journalist, to the printed page or to the state and the great armies of newspaper readers.

This argument is by no means as complete as it might have been. I have been of necessity confined to generalities and the subject is tremendous and many-angled even in generalities. Then I make no pretence of being a debater, but I am only a struggling journalist with all the limitations that that implies. I do see a light, however, that nothing can dim, and this talk, whether you believe it or not, is some sort of expression of that sight. If out what I have said any statement sticks in your heads and revolves there, I shall have been well rewarded. Even if you start to dispute what I have said, I shall have accomplished something, though you may not see it that way. Some of you may think me a rude, untutored fellow who should be crushed, and who will never get a job in your offices as long as you live. Your job does not worry me a lot, because I can become a window cleaner and make more money than an editor, but even if you did crush me, I would like you to remember that ideas travel on and on.

Kennedy Crone.

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GEO. PIERCE, Editor.      KENNEDY CRONE, Associate Editor.

## Status of Teachers

At a meeting of the Protestant Committee of Public Instruction of the Province of Quebec recently, it is reported that the status of rural teachers as regards salaries was discussed in a sympathetic vein by the members, and it was recommended that the certificated teachers of these schools should have their salaries increased and also that a minimum remuneration of \$60 per month should be aimed at.

That is a munificent salary to hand out to those who have the training of the childhood of our rural districts. Canada has always boasted that it is desirous of developing the land and of encouraging settlement in the rural districts. That being so, surely it should offer the best educational facilities to the families which are engaged in agriculture. The rural school has a right to be as well built, as well equipped and as well staffed as the urban school; but needless to say, it is not. Nor will it ever be so long as education is in the hands of small boards.

Experience in Great Britain showed that small rural education authorities invariably starved the schools, and it was only when many of them had been starved almost to extinction that the Government revised the national system and appointed county or big urban authorities to take care of education throughout the country. From time to time efforts have been made in this province to revive interest in the cause of education by campaigns; in fact, if we mistake not, there has been one in progress for some weeks past. In these efforts there has been one serious omission. The aid of press publicity has not been called in as it might have been. What is needed is not a report of the proceedings, for such reports would be rather too similar day after day to be of interest to a newspaper. But very useful publicity could be obtained for the cause of education if those promoting these campaigns could persuade a prominent newspaper to send out a man who would act as a special commissioner in going over representative districts, perhaps before or with the platform speakers, and who would find out the educational conditions of the locality, the attitude of the people, the defects and weaknesses

of the schools or of the educational system generally as viewed by the locality or from afar off.

Every small community depends upon a small handful of educated men in its midst, namely — the clergyman, the doctor, the lawyer and the schoolmaster or schoolmistress. The teacher should be as good and as well off as any of the other three. This can only be brought about by attracting the best people of the profession and keeping them there by sufficient inducement. The farmers are making a bid for government. Is it not time then that their offspring should be well looked after in the matter of education and that those who impart instruction to them should be adequately paid?

CAEDMON.

## Government's Move

REPRESENTATIVE governments should not dilly-dally with proposals put forward by representative bodies of the people; governments lose their claim to being representative if they do. It is, therefore, about time that the Canadian Government paid some close attention to the desire of about sixteen hundred labor organizations and the members of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association for a Tariff Board to lift the tariff out of politics and have it dealt with on a scientific and business basis, subject, of course, to parliamentary ratification. The government does not need to put its ear to the ground to catch the distant murmurings of this voice of the community; it has, at Ottawa, the clear records stored handily in the gramophone cabinet, so to speak.

The different organizations and individuals interested in the Tariff Board idea are becoming impatient, and the next move, which should be a speedy one, as patience is getting frayed, is up to the government.

K. C.

## The Collective Age

PRACTICALLY all trades and professions, all branches of the employing class and bodies of unskilled workers, are organized in some form or another for the protection and advancement of the special interests of their members. This is the collective or group age, and they who would ignore the fact, whether they belong to "labor" or "capital", and whatever conceit they have of themselves as "individualists", are nonentities in the sum of human existence, mere straws in the wind.

K. C.

The regular monthly meeting of the executive board of the Fifth Sunday Meeting Association will be held in Room 60, Dandurand Building, at eight o'clock on Monday evening, March 8th.



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# REPLY TO CRITICISM OF LABOR PARTY

Arthur Henderson, M.P., speaking at Widnes, England, said the Labor Party did not desire to rest its efforts on any precarious alliance or understanding with the old parties; such alliances always meant compromise, and Labor stood for fundamentals which admitted of no compromise. Mr. Churchill had had the effrontery to say that the Coalition was the best of all possible governments and had declared not only that the Labor Party was quite unfitted for the responsibility of government, but also that through its incompetence it would come hopelessly to grief. There was no evidence from Mr. Churchill in support of his opinion. He did not doubt Mr. Churchill's knowledge of political incompetence, since the latter belonged to a government which had proved thoroughly unsatisfactory and had failed utterly to redeem its own lavish promises.

Continuing, Mr. Henderson said that Mr. Churchill was not entitled to dogmatize about Labor since the Labor Party had yet to show whether it lacked executive ability, statesmanship, and administrative capacity. He, the speaker, did not mean to imply that the Labor Party was composed of men fully equipped in every respect to discharge the functions of government as they ought to be discharged, but neither were other parties so equipped. What he did assert was that the Labor Party had at its disposal men trained in public and national affairs and men intellectually

the equal of those at the disposal of any other parties. If and when Labor was called on to assume the responsibilities of executive government it would endeavor, by the constitutional use of its powers, to bring about the amelioration and elevation of national

and individual life and not, as Mr. Churchill seemed to think, to inaugurate a class dictatorship.

Man is as old as his heart is, woman is as old as her art is, love is as old as your arteries.

MORE ADULTERATED WATER

Another case occurs in Bristol man fined for selling water with little milk in it.

—London Passing Show



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## OUR LONDON LETTER

(From our own Correspondent.)

London, February 13th.

We are playing at a rather delightful little comedy which might be entitled "The Coal Owners' Grab, or Profits and what should be done with them."

I have explained that our Miners' Federation has calculated that, strikes barred, profits on coal in this country for the year ending July, 1920, should total up to the useful little sum of between seventy and eighty million pounds, after all costs are met and the owners have had a fair profit. They want it to be devoted to one of the three causes:

1. Reduction in price of coal with resultant drop in the cost of living.

2. Buying out shareholders.

3. Giving miners increased wages.

They saw the Premier about it and Mr. Lloyd George, astute as ever, replied that he had put the matter of coalowners' profits into the hands of a firm of chartered accountants, that he could say nothing until that report was to hand. It has come and it has been most clearly drawn. It predicts a surplus of six millions, but the weak spot is disclosed when we find that they have taken March instead of July, which makes the difference.

There is the difference, as explained to me by Vernon Hartshorn, one of the Miners' executive, and a member of Parliament for a part of Wales:

As a reply to our contention it is entirely valueless.

Judging the accountants' figures in the light of recent facts as to coal prices, I still say the estimate of the Miners' Federation is good. The year from July to July will show a surplus of from £80 millions.

"This is the period that has figured in the debates. Now, the accountants' report deals with a period different not only in point of time but in results—vastly different in results.

"We choose this period because it marked the first year of increased wages and reduced hours came about as a result of our agitation, and that one of our present suggestions is that if certain other things do not happen, we may have to ask for more wages.

"But now we are given, an answer to our arguments regarding one thing, a report dealing with something else. Let me explain.

"We ought to prove our contention by pointing to the fat months.

They point to the lean months, which are already paid for. We base our claims on the present and the future months, with some of the past. They base their reply on the past entirely, with the exception of the short period before March 31st.

"Now between March and July of 1919—the dates when the two calculations commence—was an extremely difficult period for the coalfields. These were what I have called the lean months, because there was so much on the debit side without anything on the credit side to balance it.

"Men were coming back from the war in thousands, but a score of defects had to be made good before these men could add a single ton of coal to output. But their wages had to be paid and placed upon the cost of production.

There was also the serious shortage of tubs and the general decay and disorganization of plant which the war had left us.

"Later there came strikes in several coalfields and the railway strike. And yet, in spite of all this, there was a surplus.

"The last quarter's accounts—to December 31st, 1919—showed the average selling price of South Wales coal to be 53c. 6d. per ton, which is 30s. a ton above the cost of production, as proved before the Coal Commission. At the present production costs and present prices, profits are being made in the South Wales coalfields at the rate of 50 millions a year."

Hartshorn asserted that the facts disclosed in the report were not likely to cause the miners to change their attitude in the least.

In the House of Commons the challenge was taken up by the Premier, who definitely turned down nationalization of mines, but offered purchase by the State of mineral royalties. This is not accepted by the miners as an effective compromise, and so we are rapidly being faced by a crisis. Before the next six weeks are over we shall have, in all probability either a coal strike or a General Election. Miners' men think that the threat of a strike may easily prove sufficient to bring an election about.

Our engineers and kindred workers are thrashing out the knotty problem of payment by results. There have been conferences with the employers and a scheme is being submitted to members. One of the conditions is that the time ratet shall

be guaranteed irrespective of earnings. The basis price is to be fixed by the employer and the workmen who are to do the work, or by other methods that may be agreed upon.

No change is to be made in the rate which shall reduce the earnings.

Piecework prices and bonus or basis lines are to be such as will enable a workman of average ability to earn at least 33 1/3 per cent. over present time rates (excluding war bonuses.)

We have just been indulging in a one day taxi strike. Strictly speaking, the men—and employers—took a holiday to hold protest meetings about the price of petrol. About 3,000 of London's cabs are driven by their owners, and they are particularly emphatic that either petrol prices must not be raised, as threatened, or fares must go up. Even the Home Secretary has announced that he is going to look after Labor's interests. This from a member of present Government is rather remarkable and illuminating as evidence of the way politicians are tending.

The dockers' inquiry continues to attract attention. Bevin's speech, arguing for standardization of wages for dockworkers at 16s. a day, evoked cordial compliments from the President of the Court, Lord Shaw, and the opposing counsel, Sir Lynden Macassey. These were not empty compliments for Bevin's performance was an exceedingly fine one. It was the most remarkable appeal for the under dog that experienced followers of public affairs say they have heard in a great many years. The other side is busy as I write trying on the futile argument that, because other trades are deciding wage claims by the districts, the dockers have no right to demand a national minimum. That is, of course, an old exploded idea that Sir Lynden Macassey that, even if there were no precedent for fixing the wages on a national basis, he and his court would not be deterred from recommending what they considered to be right.

A curious incident has occurred regarding John Brinsmead and Sons, one of the oldest piano firms in London. The factory was put on aeroplane work during the war. After armistice it reverted to its original business. The other day the proprietors coolly announced that, owing to Labor's demands, they could not carry on and were about to close down. Naturally the workers protested against being thrown out of work and produced facts to prove that no blame was attaching to them. The employers were induced to meet them and finally it has been decided that the factory shall be kept going. The



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employees stated their willingness to co-operate with the management and expressed their confidence in the ability of the management. New conditions are to be mutually agreed upon and it is a happy family once more. But it is only one more evidence of what can be done when the workers are taken into confidence, instead of being treated in an unsympathetic and dictatorial manner.

Ethelbert Pogson.

—o—

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HE—"How some of these old songs do haunt me."

SHE—"Well, you've often murdered them."

—London Opinion.

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## OUR SCOTTISH LETTER

(From our own correspondent)

Glasgow, February 14.

**T**HE new scale of wages applicable to retail drapery salespeople in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee, which has been agreed to by the Scottish Retail Drapers' Federation and the National Amalgamated Union of Shop Assistants, Warehousemen and Clerks, as minimum rates for assistants, ranges from 20s. a week for those, not less than 16s. to 60s. a week for men in their tenth year's experience, and 45s. for women with the same length of service. The agreement also stipulates that the maximum employment shall be 48 hours per week exclusive of meal hours, and not less than ten day's summer holidays with pay to those workers who have been twelve months in the continuous employment of a firm. In the case of other towns and districts in Scotland, the rate of wages shall be 10 per cent. less than that for the above-mentioned places.

### Subway Strike.

The Glasgow Subway strike has now entered upon its fourth week, and there is still no prospect of a settlement. The present position in regard to the strike will be discussed at a meeting of the Glasgow Trades and Labor Council this week. It is intended to make representation to the Lord Provost with a view to having the Subway re-opened as a public utility concern.

### Co-op. Wages Claim.

The latest development in Co-operative circles is the demand by the managers, secretaries, and heads of departments, for increased salaries. A new scale has been drawn up, which they propose should come into operation as from January 1. The scale is based on the annual turnover of the respective stores. The minimum is £5 a week (£6 in a process of grading, according to bespoke tailoring branches), and by a scale of annual sales, increases of 5s. to 10s. bring up the salary to

£10 a week, the general maximum. Under certain conditions, this maximum is exceeded and graduated according to the scale tabulation.

### Cotton Shortage

The world shortage of cotton was discussed at a meeting of the directors of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce held this week. It was pointed out that there did not appear to be any possibility of anything like a full supply of cotton for years to come. Prices today were higher than anything recorded since the cotton famine of the sixties. The directors unanimously agreed to pass a resolution, viewing with concern the grave danger to which the textile industry of the country was being exposed by the insufficient supplies of raw cotton; urging the Government to adopt the report of the Empire Cotton-Growing Committee issued last month; and agreeing to assist all they possibly could in carrying out the recommendations contained in it. It was agreed to send copies of the resolution to the Prime Minister, President of the Board of Trade, and the principal Chambers of Commerce.

### Taxation of Land.

Under the auspices of the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values, a conference of Glasgow Ward Committees was held this week. It was stated that there could not be any greater fallacy than to suppose that by basing municipal taxation on income they could relieve the over-burdened ratepayer. The only way to meet increased expenditure which at present fell on local rates was by taxing the land values increased by local necessity. The Rent Restriction Act had to continue, or there was "going to be a jolly big row", and if it was to continue no houses would be built. A resolution declaring the present system of rating to be unjust was adopted.

James Gibson.

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## The Portents of the British Political Situation

(By SIDNEY WEBB.)

POSSIBLY at no previous time has the political situation in the United Kingdom been so obscure to the publicist, and so perplexing to the prophet, as at the present moment. The victory of the Labor party in the Spen Valley constituency (an industrial centre in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where a cluster of small cities make woollen goods), after an exceptionally prolonged contest against both a coalition government candidate, and Sir John Simon, the most distinguished of Mr. Asquith's late ministers, has left London gasping. Coming as the climax of a series of seventeen bye elections, since Mr. Lloyd George's great majority in December, 1918, this exciting contest has suddenly convinced the public, not only that the present Coalition cabinet is destined to defeat, but also that the Labor party has made good its claim, as against Mr. Asquith's liberal party, to be its successor — unless Mr. Lloyd George can invent a new trick or a new combination which is what most people expect to do).

The study of bye elections is one of those fascinating pursuits of the British politician from which the conditions of most other countries debar their inhabitants. Vacancies in the House of Commons occur in three ways; by death, by promotion to a peerage or by accession to office, or by resignation. Death cannot be controlled by the government, nor yet accession to peerages through promotion. But promotion to a new peerage or accession to office are at the disposal of the government; and resignations (which take the archaic form of being appointed to a sinecure and then resigning the office) are very largely subject to its wishes. Hence the series of bye elections is a misleading sample, because a large proportion (often one-third of the whole) occur in constituencies where the government has seen fit deliberately to challenge a conflict. When bye elections go against the government, the portent is, accordingly, the more grave for its health.

Now, since the General Election, thirteen months ago, there have been, in Great Britain, seventeen bye elections, being nearly three per cent of the total of constituencies. At these elections 315,103 electors have voted. A Lloyd George Coalition candidate stood at sixteen of them; and these polled 136,917 votes, or only 43 per cent of the votes cast. The Anti-Coalition candidates polled 178,186 votes, or 57 per cent. Out of the seventeen vacancies, the Coalition lost no fewer than six seats. The verdict of the electorate upon the cabinet which, only a year ago, was installed with so triumphant a majority, is pretty conclusive. The appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober has seldom been shown so dramatically.

The figures are worth analyzing in further detail. Not all the seventeen constituencies were contested by all three parties, Coalition, Independent Liberal and Labor. There were sixteen Coalition candidates who obtained an average of 8,558 votes. There were twelve Labor candidates, whose average was 9,482. There were ten Independent Liberals who averaged only 6,024 votes. The contrast can be put even more graphically. At six elections there were candidates of all three parties. At these six the total Coalition vote was 46,438; the total Anti-Coalition vote was 65,788. But the most significant fact is that, in these three-cornered contests, the Labor party candidates got no fewer than 40,058 votes, whilst the Independent Liberals got only 25,730. At the last three of these three-cornered elections, polling within the past month (St. Albans, Bromley and Spen Valley) the Labor party had actually the largest aggregate poll, namely 30,947; against 29,903 for the Coalition, or government candidates (who obtained only 40 per cent of the votes cast), and no more than 12,718 for the Independent Liberal, or Asquithian candidates.

Out of sixteen Coalition seats vacated within thirteen months (the seventeenth was that of a Labor Member) the Coalition loss of six is equal to a loss of 182 on the whole 500 Coalition seats in Great Britain. Great as is the government majority in the House of Commons—in the aggregate, something like 400, or in practice, on a close call, even more—anything like so great a turnover of votes at a General Election would practically sweep it away; and would, at the same time, give the Labor party an absolute majority in Parliament.

But this is not how things happen in Britain, and no one expects such a result. In the first place, all past experience indicates that a General Election never reproduces, in the aggregate, the statistical results of even the whole series of preceding bye elections. At each bye election, there is a concentration of interest, a concentration of electioneering machinery, and a special concentration of attention on the subjects of contemporary political controversy—notably on the mistakes and misfortunes of the government itself—which are necessarily absent in the conditions of a General Election when all the six hundred constituencies are polling simultaneously. In political meteorology, bye election results afford an indication of the probable political weather of the near future, but no more than an

indication of a probability. It may be accepted as a political axiom that the General Election will be different from the statistical inferences drawn from the bye elections; though how different no one can predict.

In the second place, the conditions of a General Election invariably differ from those of the preceding bye elections, in that the Government itself is affected by the inferences which it draws from the bye elections, so that it changes front; discards as far as it can the features which it regards as likely to be unpopular in the eyes of the electorate, and modifies its platform to suit the currents that its own political meteorology enables it to detect or to foresee.

Thus, the government at a General Election—and the same is true of the political party or parties making up the Opposition—is not the same entity as that which appealed to the electors at the bye elections. Finally, the bye elections turn, overwhelmingly, on the electors' judgment of the present. At a General Election, the eyes of the men and women voters are fixed, very largely, on the future. At a bye election, what is given is, to a great extent, a judgment on the actions and accomplishments of the government, in the light of the criticisms of their opponents. At the General Election, though what has been done is a considerable element, much more turns on what the government, on the one hand, and the Opposition parties on the other, succeed in persuading the electorate that they are respectively going to do. All these considerations make very deceptive the inferences that are apt to be drawn from the political meteorology of bye elections.

What, then, may be expected in British politics in the near future, in the light of these bye election results? The first thing to notice is the "arrival" of the Labor party. It is, in all respects, the same party as it was three or four months ago. But the British world is now fully aware of it, not merely as an organized party that has come to stay, but as the creator of the future government of the nation; and as the inevitable successor of the present Coalition party when that ceases, in due course, to hold power and office.

Foolish persons, in and out of Parliament, continue to talk of the Labor party as a "class" party; as being manifestly incompetent to fill the high offices of state, and as being patently incapable of grappling with high problems of foreign affairs or complicated statesmanship.

Such persons are, however, still under the simple illusion that the Labor party is a party of laborers. They are presumably aware that the Liberal party is not a party of men and women of free-handed, broadminded and generously inclined disposition (which is what is meant by the word "liberal");

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and that the Coalition, Unionist or Conservative party covers many persons for whom either of these epithets is a misnomer.

But they cannot get it into their heads that the Labor party is no more a party of laborers than the Conservative party is one of landlords, or the Liberal party one of capitalists. It is a party formed on the basis of opinions, like any other political party; and the feature in its history during the past five years has been the extent to which it has been joined by barristers, teachers, clerks, university professors, doctors, architects, authors and journalists, workers in physical science laboratories, and even an increasing number of manufacturing and commercial employers. It includes even some generals in the army, and admirals in the navy; a bishop or two; and, in fact, three or four members of the House of Lords.

The Labor candidates at the last five bye elections of interest happen not to have been "workmen" in the ordinary sense. They were respectively a medical practitioner, an ex-clerk in a merchant's office, the manager of a department of a great cooperative society, a retired civil engineer and the manager of a section under the National Insurance Act. These things are now becoming realized by the public, which is getting used to the idea of a Labor government. In this sense the Labor party has "arrived".

What handicaps the Labor party most at the moment is its poverty. Its millions of affiliated members contribute only twopence a year each to its funds, which barely suffice for central office expenses. Candidatures have to be paid for entirely by the poor local parties, or by the trade unions and other organizations promoting them, or by the candidates themselves. At the last General Election, even under these conditions, 361 Labor candidates were run, at a total cost it is estimated, of £200,000.

The party ought to contest every bye election, but has, this year, only managed to fight twelve out of seventeen. It ought to put six hundred candidates in the field at once in preparation for a General Election, and equip them with competent election agents and organizers, and start vigorously campaigning from Cornwall to Sutherland. But this involves a total expenditure during the ensuing twelve months of a million sterling. If this sum could be raised (together with a quarter of a million with which to convert the Daily Herald into an effective national newspaper covering the whole kingdom) I personally believe that the Labor party could ensure an absolute majority at the next General Election. With Labor and the New Social Order as the programme, and an organization only half as complete as that of the Unionist party, the Labor party would sweep the board. This, however,

will not happen. No such fund will be raised. Labor candidatures will continue to be run with insufficient funds and inadequate organization — sometimes with astonishing results.

The second outstanding feature is the demise of the Liberal party. It was bad enough for Mr. Asquith and all his colleagues in the late ministry to lose their seats at the last General Election; and for the party to come back to the House of Commons merely thirty strong; only half the strength of the Labor party. But a whole year has passed, and neither Mr. Asquith nor any other Liberal leader has been able to get back to Parliament, whilst the prospects of their re-election become distinctly more dim.

The very constituencies that used to be most favorable to their candidatures now seem to them political death-traps. On five out of the six occasions during the past year on which Liberal, Labor and Coalitionists have met, the Liberal has received fewer votes than the Labor man. What is being said, as a general law, is that the average poll of a Liberal candidate is 6,024; that of a Labor candidate 9,482. The last Liberal who ventured to go to the poll before the Spen Valley debacle forfeited his deposit of £150 (that is to say, did not poll even one-eighth of the votes cast).

The result is that the Daily News and the Star, the representatives of Liberalism in the London press,

are now earnestly begging the Liberal candidate for the pending vacancy at Ashton-under-Lyne to withdraw; and are actually recommending all Liberals in that constituency (whether he withdraws or not) to vote rather for the Labor candidate.

The Liberal party, which may be said to have been first effectively consolidated by Gladstone in 1868, after the couple of decades of party disruption that followed the repeal of the Corn Laws, has, after half a century of progressive reforms of a curiously limited character, come finally to an end.

The question now is how will Mr. Lloyd George, whose ingenuity has hitherto been unflinching, meet the menacing situation. He can easily "hold on". There is at present nothing to compel a dissolution, which is not legally required, until 1923. The very certainty of defeat at the polls will even strengthen the Premier's hand in coercing his Unionist and Conservative colleagues to accept and support any proposal which he deems necessary. The threat of a dissolution, which a Prime Minister may (at his own peril) at any moment demand from the King, will be sufficient in the last resort, to reduce both ministers and members of the House of Commons to submission.

Thus, a serious cabinet disagreement, which is almost the only event that might compel a premature dissolution, is less than ever

likely. On the other hand, if the present Coalition government goes on for its legal term, and waits to dissolve until 1923, political experience points to its succumbing to an electoral defeat as overwhelming as that which Mr. Balfour's government met in 1906; when it, too, had outstayed its welcome. Those who pride themselves most on knowledge of Mr. Lloyd George's psychology are convinced that nothing is more likely than that he will consent thus to drag on to certain political annihilation. He will not go down a Conservative drain-pipe.

What we may expect, therefore, is some dramatic political happening within the next twelve months or so. Mr. Lloyd George will make up his mind either to rehabilitate the Coalition government in popular estimation by very drastic transformation of policy, personnel and programme—creating out of it, perhaps, a new Centre party, with a startling "forward" programme of social reform, whilst denouncing everything else as Bolshevism — or else (and this is quite possible) throwing up the attempt; dramatically resigning his post and advising the King to entrust Mr. Bonar Law with the formation of a Unionist government.

In the latter case, Mr. Lloyd George would cross the floor of the House of Commons, and raise his own standard in the country, collecting round him a party of personal adherents, recruited largely from among the Liberals at present adhering to the Coalition. He should hear from him no more of nunciation of Bolshevism. He would cultivate friendly relations with the Labor party, and antagonizing it. There might, possibly, be no overt alliance; and rivalry between Labor party candidates and Lloyd George candidates at the General Election could not altogether be avoided.

But no clashing would be done so far as was possible; and there would be a common disposition not to quarrel too much in face of a Unionist and Conservative enemy. The result of a General Election in 1922 on these lines would probably give the Labor party and the Lloyd George party four hundred members between them. A combination to take office would be inevitable. Whether Mr. Lloyd George or Mr. Henderson, Mr. Thomas or Mr. Clynes was Prime Minister would matter little difference. The government would be joint; the offices would be apportioned out among the most capable men, on the one hand, and the most influential leaders on the other; the policy would be that of the Labor party; the steering would be by Mr. Lloyd George. This seems the most probable forecast for 1925; but whether it will be realized as soon as 1922, and through what stages we shall in the meantime pass, defies prediction.

Sidney Webb,

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## Manchester Workmen To Build Own Houses

(By W. P. CROZIER, in *Dearborn Independent*.)

**T**HERE is a shortage of houses in Manchester, England. Rents are fixed by the Government, and men of wealth are slow to invest in keeping with the home needs of the toilers. As a result the bricklayers have asked men of other trades to join them in an organization to build their own homes. Mr. Crozier tells the details of the very interesting plan.

Manchester, England,  
February 1920.

A most interesting and important experiment for the building of artisans' houses is about to be made in Manchester. Everywhere in England at the present time large numbers of houses are needed and they are being built either not at all or very slowly. All kinds of authorities are in some measure or other at work upon the task and still the houses do not appear. Builders and contractors, municipalities and the state, which work through the Ministry of Health, are supposed to be doing what they can, but so far with result which makes no impression at all on the needs of the population. Suddenly it has been proposed in Manchester that the bricklayers should form themselves into a group, should obtain the co-operation of all the other workmen whose labor goes to the house-building, and should themselves build the houses without the intervention of builders or contractors. The scheme has been enthusiastically taken up by the trade unions concerned. Already there are signs that the same principle will be applied in other towns and there is every likelihood that before long a National Building Guild will be established for the construction of workmen's houses throughout the length and breadth of the country.

At a low estimate more than half a million houses are needed at this moment in the country. Manchester alone has an urgent need of twenty thousand, and if fifty thousand could be built within the next few years they would not do more than supply the probable needs of the population. The difficulties in the way consist partly in the enormous cost of present-day materials and labor and partly in the difficulty of obtaining sufficient workmen, especially bricklayers. It is estimated that a house which before the war cost \$2,000 to build could not now be erected for anything less than \$6,000. It is impossible for a landlord to let such houses for an economic rent. There are any number of houses whose rent is at present about \$200 which ought, on the basis of a true valuation of house property, to

bring in a rent of nearer \$450. At the present moment landlords who suffer a severe injustice in this respect, are unable to obtain anything like an economic rental for their houses because all the houses below a certain rental value are protected by Rent Restrictions Acts up to the middle of 1921 and it is impossible for the landlords to raise the rents by more than ten per cent. Equally it would be almost impossible for landlords to obtain a fair rental for new houses which are erected on the present scale of costs. This is the reason why the state has had to intervene with subsidies and why, subsidies apart, builders are themselves averse from undertaking building work.

### Shortage of Labor.

Further, builders have found the greatest difficulty in obtaining adequate labor for the building of dwelling houses. Or, rather, they frequently have on hand construction work which is far more profitable to them than the building of houses which it will notoriously be difficult, if not impossible, to let at a fair rental. It is a much more profitable business to set up, for instance, an engineering works, a motor garage, or a picture theater than a row of workmen's dwellings. One of the complaints that is now being most widely made is that a great deal of what is called "luxury building" is steadily going on, while the masses of the population cannot find houses in which to live, and our Ministry of Health has only lately issued regulations which will enable the municipal authorities to stop the erection of buildings which, in their opinion, is delaying the construction of new houses. No definite rules are laid down but it will be their duty to decide each case on its merits. The local authority, says a recent statement on this point, "will have to determine whether here and now in its own area such a ('luxury') building is delaying houses or whether it is of more importance than the erection of new houses. A new factory, for example, means more work, wages and production and its construction should be prohibited with the greatest diffidence. On the other hand, if there are no vacant houses in the district and new labor is likely to be attracted to the factory, it might be advisable to hold over the construction of a portion of the new building. It becomes a question of relative urgency."

Faced by all these difficulties, it occurred to the bricklayers of Manchester and their advisers, some of whom have long been interested in the idea of craftsmen's guilds, themselves independently to undertake to build a large number of workmen's dwellings. They therefore decided in the first place to form a Bricklayers' Guild Committee and to include in it representatives of all

the chief trade unions whose labor would be needed if houses were to be built at all. This is not in itself a small matter, since, roughly speaking, a house cannot be built without the co-operation of each and all of the following trade union workmen; bricklayers, carpenters and joiners, stonemasons, painters, slaters and tilers, builder's laborers, woodcutting machinists, plasterers, paviors and street-masons. It was then decided that the Guild Committee should lay before the Manchester city council a formal tender to build two thousand houses. If the council would allow them to build the lot, so much the better, but if not, the bricklayers were content to begin on the first five hundred with a view to showing that they could build them quicker and better than the existing system and then to going on with the building of some more.

There were obviously a great number of practical difficulties to be overcome. The bricklayers are a small and composite body and this idea of a craftsmen's guild has been fomenting among them for some time, but it was by no means certain that other trade unions, notably the plumbers and the carpenters, whose participation is essential, would be willing to throw over the present system which they know and understand for the risks and uncertainties of a daring experiment. This difficulty has already been overcome. Without exception all the trade union bodies that have already been enumerated have promised their vigorous support to the scheme.

The second obstacle was the question of finance. The builder who takes on a big contract has large financial resources. But a workmen's guild would be starting, so to say, with no resources at all except—and this of course is a tremendous qualification—its own labor. It was pretty clear that as soon as the Manchester city council began to pay out its customary advances of money on the work actually in operation the Guild Committee would be able to carry on, but the question arose first how it would pay its way before the city council payments were available, and secondly, whether or not the council could be induced. The Guild Committee say that there may be only this number ready to work on dwelling houses under the existing system, but that they can lay their hands on at least 750. They say also that whereas a bricklayer under present conditions will lay only about four hundred bricks a day he will lay six or seven hundred or more if he feels that he is once more working on his own skilled craftman among his fellows and has a personal and responsible interest in the quality of the work which he produces. They point to a big new building in London which was held up during the war and which was finally finished by the workmen themselves without the aid of the contractor and finished, they maintain, more rapidly and with a better quality of work than had been though to be possible under ordinary conditions.

Certainly the spirit in which the whole thing has been taken up by every grade of workman in Manchester does suggest that in this scheme the men see a means of putting their energies into a creative labor which they will take a pride in doing. Very shortly we shall see a National Guild formed on the model of this Manchester project and if the local experiment succeeds it will eventually be merged in the national organization and will have given an impulse to a very striking change in our social and economic system. No one quite knows what the experiment may lead to, but assuredly there has been none in recent years which contains the seeds of such striking developments in the system with which we have grown up.

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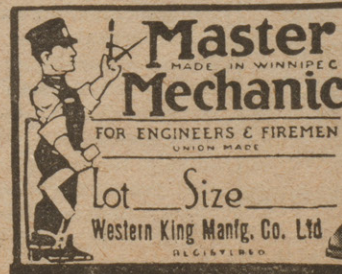
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